Whole grains are a delicious way to add fiber, vitamins and minerals to your diet! Here are some tips and ideas to enjoy the taste and nutrition benefits.

1. Start your morning with a bowl of hot or cold whole grain cereal.
2. Use whole wheat bread or tortillas when making sandwiches and wraps.
3. There are many tasty whole grain crackers available! Pair them with a little peanut butter or reduced-fat cheese for a quick snack.
4. Substitute whole wheat pasta for regular pasta in your favorite recipes.
5. Make a trail mix using whole grain cereal, nuts and dried fruit for a quick on-the-go snack.
6. Pair your favorite stir-fry with brown rice instead of white rice.
7. When you make grits or polenta, be sure to pick whole grain versions.

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Multi-grain….made with whole grains….15 grams of whole grains per serving….all these terms sound similar, but they mean very different things!

To make sure you are picking the best whole grain product, follow these 2 simple steps:

Look at the ingredients list on a package. The first or second ingredient on the list should say “whole grain” if it is a rice product, it may say “brown rice” instead of or in addition to “whole grain”.

Check out the nutrition facts label to see the % DV (daily value) of dietary fiber. Your whole grain choice will likely contain at least 8% DV of fiber per serving.
Adding more whole grains to your family’s meals is a smart move. Not only do they provide the vitamins, nutrients and minerals needed to keep your family healthy and strong, but whole grains also contain dietary fiber, which may help reduce your risk of heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend making half of the grains you eat whole, so use whole grains instead of a refined-grain product. Whole grains are healthier because they contain more nutrients.

How to Find Whole Grains
The quick way is to look for the whole grain stamp on the package label. If there is no whole grain stamp, then look at the ingredients listing. The first ingredient should be whole grains.

Remember, being brown doesn’t make bread whole wheat! Even if bread labels advertise "seven-grain" or "multigrain," they are not necessarily whole grain products. Finding whole-grain breads takes some label reading skills.

Looking for Ways to Add Whole Grains to Your Meals?
- Start with breakfast. Choose oatmeal, whole grain toast or other whole-grain breakfast cereal.
- Enjoy whole grain pasta, brown rice, corn or whole wheat tortillas with lunch or breakfast.
- Experiment with different grains such as buckwheat, bulgur, millet, quinoa, sorghum, or whole rye or barley. To save time, cook extra bulgur or barley and freeze half to heat and serve later as a quick side dish.
- Add oatmeal, whole wheat bread or bread crumbs to meat loaf dishes. Enjoy whole grains as a snack! Try popcorn, 100-percent whole-wheat or rye crackers.

Sources: www.eatright.org, www.wholegrainscouncil.org

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